



News Release

Communications New Brunswick

N.B. Human Rights Commission

Human Rights Commission 1997-98 annual report (99/01/28)

NB 107

Jan. 28, 1999

FREDERICTON (CNB) -- The 1997-98 annual report of the New Brunswick Human Rights Commission was released today by Labour Minister Joan Kingston.

"Last year, we marked the 50th anniversary of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights," commission chair Constantine Passaris said, "and we take pride in the fact that its principal author was New Brunswick's native son, John Humphrey."

"Our commission wants to continue to build upon New Brunswick's heritage of tolerance and to be a leader in the promotion and protection of human rights," Passaris added. "We believe we must forge a human rights culture that will combat discrimination and promote equality, and so establish a solid foundation for New Brunswick's 21st century."

Commission director Janet Cullinan noted in the annual report the Commission had processed 140 formal and 425 informal complaints in 1997-98. The majority were employment related, most of them dealing with sexual discrimination or sexual harassment. One case was referred to a human rights Board of Inquiry for hearing. The board upheld the complaint, which involved a wife who was dismissed because her husband worked for the same employer.

Karen Taylor, associate director responsible for education and development, reported that a four-part video series, Vision for Equality, was produced and launched in cooperation with Fundy Communications. The commission's website was updated, a series of ten fact sheets were published and research was initiated for Equality in Action, an historical overview of human rights and the commission since 1967. Thirtieth anniversary celebrations continued with the development of partnerships and promoting an appreciation for human rights by organizing and participating in several conferences, including an Executive Round Table on Diversity and presenting 74 workshops across the province.

The Commission administers the provincial Human Rights Act, which prohibits discrimination and harassment based on religion, age, marital status, sex, sexual orientation, mental and physical disability, race, colour, national origin, place of origin and ancestry. It applies to all employers, public services and housing, except those that fall under federal jurisdiction.

99/01/28

EDITORS NOTE -- Copies of the 1997-98 annual report of the New Brunswick Human Rights Commission are available from Francis Young at 506-453-2308; Constantine Passaris, chairman, may

be reached at 506-453-2301.

2008-00930/

99/01/28

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